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SUBJECT: AUSTRIA TO PARTICIPATE IN UN CHAD MISSION

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1.(U) Austrian Defense Minister Darabos (SPO) and FM Plassnik (OVP) independently confirmed September 26 that Austria is considering participating in the EU-led Chad mission under the UN's MINURCAT mandate. According to the defense minister, Austria would send 50-60 peacekeepers with medical, engineering and water purification expertise. The Austrian peacekeeper contingent would also include a fighter unit "for the protection of the refugees," Darabos added.

2. (U) Both Darabos, who will travel to Chad October 3-5, and Plassnik stressed the need for a clear exit strategy as a precondition for Austria's participation. Parliament's main committee must approve the mission; the body is scheduled to vote on the proposal in mid-October.

McCaw